

Changeling Hook

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 05 Jun 2008

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Dave Tallman — 05 Jun 2008, 04:10

If Peter Palmieri is Peter Pan, where's Captain Hook? Not far away -- the narrator, Peter Palmer, has plenty of Hook imagery about him:

- 1) "great, stone-beaked, hook-billed snapping turtle" which caught young chicks.
- 2) "the iron jaw of the mailbox closed on them. Have you ever noted how eager it is to close when you have pulled out your hand?" This is like Hook's crocodile.
- 3) "I was supposed to be helping a captain teach...". Captain Teach was Blackbeard.
- 4) "my father could bend a big nail..". A hook is a bent nail.
- 5) "a fat boy who was tongue-tied and laughed at everything." Disney's Mr. Smee.
- 6) "buck teeth and freckles" one of Disney's lost boys, invited to become a pirate.
- 7) "bossed and mothered us from the towering dignity of thirteen," In the musical the pirates wanted Wendy to be their mother, too.
- 8) Pete hitchhiked, forming his hand into a hook shape.
- 9) Captain Hook is known for his red cloth coat. Pete was a "red" turncoat who worked in textiles.
- 10) He tied a rock to a frog, as Hook made victims walk the plank.
- 11) He stabbed the frog with a broad blade, as Hook stabbed with his sword.
- 12) "We meant to play pirates or something."
- 13) "I was too tired to fence with them."

So narrator Pete is Captain Hook. He ends up on Neverland island, along with Peter Pan and the Lost Boys; but alone in a cave, not fighting Peter. What's the symbolic meaning?

Papa Palmieri thought Peter would leave them when he could no longer be Mama's son. But the at the end it says, "Papa was wrong. Peter still has the same last name as always and I guess now he always will, but the boys don't call him by it much." So Peter remained a Palmieri. How did this work? He could become the "son" of Maria. She would bear stigma in the eyes of the town for having a child out of wedlock, even though she was innocent. It looks like Peter is the Christ figure in this story, son of the virgin Maria.

There's an official sequel to the original Barrie novel called "Peter Pan in Scarlet," in which Peter is tempted to become like Hook after donning his scarlet coat. He defeats Hook by casting off the coat, nearly dying in the process. I think Wolfe read this and used it as a symbol of redemption.

That's why Peter starts off playing Vikings and pirates with the others. In Christian theology, Jesus took on the flesh and defeated sin on the cross. In this view, Peter Palmer is a repentant sinner. He comes back to the Church (Mama Church, Papa Pope, Apostle Paul, Maria, and Jesus). The record of his sin is wiped clean and Jesus takes his place. The old man (the old self) is dead and left in the cave tomb. That may be why when Larry Niven asked for an explanation of this

story Wolfe simply said "The old man is dead."